

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior revisions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1~20. (*Cancelled*)

21. (*Currently amended*) A search service system comprising:

at least one memory having program instructions and databases, the databases including:

a category classification database including at least one ~~classification record, the classification record including~~ a representative category associated with [[a]] one or more predetermined keyword [[group]] groups, each of the predetermined keyword [[group]] groups including [[a]] one or more representative keywords ~~keyword~~ and other keywords associated with the respective representative keywords ~~keyword~~;

a keyword database including [[a]] at least one predetermined keyword group and data indicative of a number of searches made using [[a]] one or more representative keywords ~~keyword~~ or other keywords associated with the respective representative keywords ~~keyword~~, each of the representative keywords ~~keyword~~ representing the other keywords associated with the representative keyword, which convey a same or similar meaning;

means for receiving a selection of a representative category associated with a predetermined keyword group from a manager;

means for associating a representative keyword included in a first keyword group associated with a first representative category, with a second keyword group associated with a second representative category to reflect current societal interest, independent of statistical data of previous searches ~~updating the received representative category associated with the predetermined keyword group in the classification record by associating the received representative category with a different predetermined keyword group;~~

means for receiving a search request from a user through a communication network, the search request including a search keyword;

means for searching the category classification database for a representative category associated with a ~~[[first]]~~ keyword group, ~~the first keyword group~~ including the received search keyword, the means for searching the category classification database determining at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category;

means for searching the keyword database for ~~a the at least one~~ keyword group associated with the searched representative category and data indicative of a number of searches made using ~~[[a]]~~ one or more representative ~~keyword~~ keywords or other keywords associated with the respective representative keywords included in the searched keyword group ~~each keyword group of the at least one keyword group, the at least one keyword group including the first keyword group;~~

means for providing the user with information showing popularity of keywords related to ~~the keyword included in the search request based,~~ at least in part, upon the data indicative of the respective number of searches made using the respective representative keyword keywords or

other keywords associated with the respective representative keywords included in the searched
[[first]] keyword group; and

means for updating the data indicative of [[the]] a number of searches made using [[the]]
a representative keyword corresponding to the search keyword or other keywords associated with
the representative keyword ~~first keyword group~~ in response to the search request from the user.

22. *(Previously presented)* The system of claim 21, wherein the information showing popularity
of the searched keyword shows popularity ranks of the at least one keyword group associated
with the searched representative category.

23. *(Previously presented)* The system of claim 21, wherein the information showing popularity
of the searched keyword shows a portion of the at least one keyword group associated with the
searched representative category based upon the popularity of the at least one keyword group
associated with the searched representative category.

24. *(Previously presented)* The system of claim 21, wherein the information showing popularity
of the searched keyword shows changes in the popularity of the searched keyword in association
with the other keywords of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched
representative category.

25-29. *(Canceled)*

30. (*Currently amended*) A search service method comprising the steps of:

maintaining at least one ~~classification record~~ representative category associated with one or more predetermined keyword groups in a category classification database, ~~wherein the classification record comprises a representative category associated with a predetermined keyword group,~~ each of the predetermined keyword [[group]] groups including [[a]] one or more representative keywords keyword and other keywords associated with the respective representative keywords keyword;

upon receipt of instructions from a manager, associating a [[first]] representative keyword included in a first keyword group associated with a first representative category, ~~category~~ with a second keyword group associated with a second representative category to reflect current societal interest, independent of statistical data of previous searches ~~different representative keyword in a different predetermined keyword group;~~

maintaining at least one predetermined keyword group and data indicative of a number of searches made using [[a]] one or more representative keyword or other keywords associated with the respective representative keywords keyword, in a keyword database, each of the representative keywords keyword representing the other keywords associated with the respective representative keyword, which convey a same or similar meaning;

receiving a search request from a user through a communication network, the search request including a search keyword;

searching the category classification database for a representative category associated with a [[first]] keyword group, ~~the first keyword group~~ including the ~~received~~ search keyword;

searching the keyword database for ~~a at least one~~ keyword group associated with the searched representative category and data indicative of a number of searches made using one or more ~~[[a]]~~ representative keywords ~~keyword~~ or other keywords associated with the respective representative keywords included in the searched keyword group ~~each keyword group of the at least one keyword group, the at least one keyword group including the first keyword group;~~

providing the user with information showing popularity of keywords related to the keyword included in the search request based, at least in part, upon the data indicative of the respective number of searches made using the respective representative keywords ~~keyword~~ or other keywords associated with the respective representative keywords included in the searched ~~[[first]]~~ keyword group; and

updating the data indicative of the number of searches made using ~~[[the]]~~ a representative keyword corresponding to the search keyword or other keywords associated with the representative keyword ~~first keyword group~~ in response to the search request from the user.

31. *(Previously presented)* The method of claim 30, wherein the information showing popularity of the searched keyword shows popularity ranks of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

32. *(Previously presented)* The method of claim 30, wherein the information showing popularity of the searched keyword shows a portion of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category based upon the popularity of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

33. (*Currently amended*) The method system of claim 30, wherein the information showing popularity of the searched keyword shows changes in the popularity of the searched keyword in association with the other keywords of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

34. (*Canceled*)

35. (*Currently amended*) One or more storage media having stored thereon a computer program that, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform acts including: A computer-readable record medium recording a program for implementing a search service method comprising the steps of:

maintaining at least one ~~classification record~~ representative category associated with one or more predetermined keyword groups in a category classification database, wherein the ~~classification record~~ comprises a representative category associated with a predetermined keyword group, each of the predetermined keyword [[group]] groups including [[a]] one or more representative keywords keyword and other keywords associated with the respective representative keywords keyword;

upon receipt of instructions from a manager, associating a [[first]] representative keyword included in a first keyword group associated with a first representative category, category with a second keyword group associated with a second representative category to reflect current societal

~~interest, independent of statistical data of previous searches~~ different representative keyword in a different predetermined keyword group;

maintaining at least one predetermined keyword group and data indicative of a number of searches made using ~~[[a]]~~ one or more representative keyword or other keywords associated with the respective representative ~~keywords~~ keyword, in a keyword database, each of the representative ~~keywords~~ keyword representing the other keywords associated with the respective representative keyword, which convey a same or similar meaning;

receiving a search request from a user through a communication network, the search request including a search keyword;

searching the category classification database for a representative category associated with a ~~[[first]]~~ keyword group, ~~the first keyword group~~ including the received search keyword;

searching the keyword database for ~~a at least one~~ keyword group associated with the searched representative category and data indicative of a number of searches made using one or more ~~[[a]]~~ representative ~~keywords~~ keyword or other keywords associated with the respective representative keywords included in the searched keyword group ~~each keyword group of the at least one keyword group, the at least one keyword group including the first keyword group;~~

providing the user with information showing popularity of keywords related to the ~~keyword included in the search request based, at least in part, upon the data indicative of the~~ respective number of searches made using the respective representative ~~keywords~~ keyword or other keywords associated with the respective representative keywords included in the searched ~~[[first]]~~ keyword group; and

updating the data indicative of the number of searches made using ~~[[the]]~~ a representative keyword corresponding to the search keyword or other keywords associated with the representative keyword ~~first keyword group~~ in response to the search request from the user.

36. *(Previously presented)* The one or more storage media ~~computer readable record medium~~ of claim 35, wherein the information showing popularity of the searched keyword shows popularity ranks of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

37. *(Previously presented)* The one or more storage media ~~computer readable record medium~~ of claim 35, wherein the information showing popularity of the searched keyword shows a portion of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category based upon the popularity of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

38. *(Canceled)*